Kickback in tender for carrying Haj Pilgrims

*76. SHRI V.N. GADGIL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any tender was floated in 1999 for carrying Haj pilgrims;

(b) whether the offers of five companies were rejected on flimsy grounds.

(c) how much was the agreed fare for each passengers; and

(d) whether it is a fact that about 20 crores of rupees were paid as kickback in the deal?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir. Air India had floated global tender on 9.11.1999 to invite bids for chartering haj flights during haj season—2000.

(b) The bids of 5 parties were rejected by the Haj Tender Committee on technical grounds as well as due to non production of required documents.

(c) The agreed fare is US $ 523 per pilgrim for ACMI (Aircraft, Crew, Maintenance and Insurance) and fuel for haj operations—2000. After adding other costs *viz* landing, handling charges etc. the total estimated fare comes to Rs. 31044/- per pilgrim of which fare charged from each pilgrim is Rs. 12,000 and the remaining Rs. 19044 is the Government subsidy.

(d) No, Sir.

Malfunctioning of telephones in Pauri Garhwal region

†*77. SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the telephone facility provided by Government in most of the villages under the village panchayats of Pauri Garhwal, Uttar Pradesh at present, is disturbed;

(b) whether telephone No. 4627 provided in Village-Bara P.O.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Pesoli, Distt Pauri Garhwal has been disturbed for the last many years, as a result of which local residents are feeling inconvenient; and

(c) whether Government propose to take any action to regularise this facility so that people may avail advantages thereof; if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The telephone No. 4627 in village Bara panchayat PCO was disconnected in February, 1999 due to non-payment. The outstanding dues against the said number upto December, 1998 was Rs. 455/-. Intimation to the Gram Pradhan was also sent to this effect in January, 1999 but nothing has been heard from him so far.

(c) Yes, Sir. Field unit has been advised to close and shift the PCO to a new location so that people may avail this facility.

Appointment of political persons as members of the constitution review committee

†*78. SHRI ONKAR SINGH LAKHAWAT: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Shri Venketachalliah, Chairman of the Commission/ Committee set up to review the Constitution has objected to the making of such persons as the members of the Committee who are linked to politics;

(b) whether Government doubt the ability, knowledge, honesty, impartiality and patriotism of such law experts who are linked to politics; and

(c) if not, what is Government's reaction to Shri Venkatachalliah's opinion?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI RAM JETHMALANI): (a) to (c) No Communication has been received from Shri Justice M.N.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.